

Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategy Plan 2015 - 2020



Prepared by the
Ministry of Tourism and Culture
& Tourism Industry Stakeholders

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His Excellency, Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh,
President of The Republic of The Gambia

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT

The Tourism sub-sector remains a crucial and relevant sub-sector in the economic development aspirations of our beloved nation, The Gambia. Over the last 20 years, my Government has remained steadfast in our economic development aspiration pursuits and our focus on tourism remains unscathed.

My Government, through the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, will continue to pursue appropriate strategies to restore Gambian Tourism to its former glory following the challenging 2014/15 Tourism season, which was preceded by the unfortunate occurrence of the Ebola Virus Disease in March, 2014 in the West Africa Region. Notwithstanding this unfortunate circumstance and the toll it has taken on our Tourism Industry, I am convinced and largely as a result of the importance my Government attaches to the Tourism Industry even though we did not register one case of Ebola, that by the year 2020, we shall become the Tourism Haven and Paradise we envisage.

In the above vein, I want to seize this singular opportunity to reassure the Tourism Stakeholders, both national and international, of the commitment of my Government to the country's Tourism Industry. My Government will continue to lend support to the aspirations and strategies contained in the **Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategy Plan**. As a Government we will continue to pay attention to the Tourism Product and encourage the development of more high quality four and five star hotels and encourage further development of our ecotourism facilities in the hinterland. This diversification of our tourism product is important considering

the need to enhance the resilience of our communities in line with the increasing importance global tourism attaches to conservation, biodiversity, ecosystem resilience, and responsible tourism practices for preservation of our ways of life.

The efforts that my Government has made in the promotion of our culture, our cultural norms and values, and the need to bring to the attention of the world the beauty of our Gambian way of life will continue to receive the maximum support of my Government. In this regard, I urge the Ministry of Tourism & Culture to pursue in earnest the strategies conceived for the Culture portfolio as without our culture our survival as a nation would be threatened.

In line with the above focus on Culture, let me underpin the importance of Quality and Service Standards delivery in our hospitality industry. Tourism is about service and timely service delivery. The role that the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute should play in rendering Destination Gambia a Tourism Haven is all the more apparent and this should be ensured without any room for complacency.

I seize this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the conceptualization and development of the **Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategy Plan** and those who would oversee and ensure its implementation. I wish you all the best and pray that **Allah, Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala**, guide you in the implementation of the strategy on behalf of the Gambian people and for the benefit of the Gambian people.

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER



The **Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategy Plan**, the plan that seeks to guide the development and realization of the aspirations of the Tourism Industry for the next five years, 2015 – 2020, is timely and has come at a time when the past gains registered by the industry has been put to the test by the unfortunate events of the Ebola Virus Disease. Whilst the Tourism Industry has demonstrated some degree of resilience, the fact remains that the industry has taken some beating; a beating that has made us, the stakeholders, have a re-think in terms of ensuring some cushioning should future threats to the resilience of our industry present itself.

Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategy Plan is a clear demonstration of the commitment of the Government of The Gambia to the Tourism sub-sector and under the distinguished and dynamic leadership of His Excellency, the President of the Republic of The Gambia, **Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh**.

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with the development of this Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategy Plan but what I am most pleased about is the profound level and degree of support and commitment that the Tourism Stakeholders and the Tourism Select Committee of the National Assembly demonstrated during the conceptualization and validation of the plan. To these people and those not directly associated with tourism but reserve interest in developments in the industry, I owe you a great deal of gratitude. Your ideas and

views are cherished and I hope we will continue to receive your support.

Over the years, significant achievements have been registered in the Tourism industry. These achievements must be improved upon and it is in this regard that we the stakeholders have concerted our efforts to propel the industry to become the Tourism Haven and Paradise we envisaged under our Vision 2020 Economic Development blueprint.

Transforming The Gambia into the envisaged Tourism Haven calls for us joining hands and supporting each other in that initiative; an initiative that has started well and for which we pray to God, The Almighty, to end well. I want to seize this opportunity to thank His Excellency, the President of the Republic of The Gambia, **Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh**, for challenging us to deliver a Strategy Plan and we the stakeholders continue to count on his unflinching support as we journey on towards delivering the Tourism Haven and Paradise we have been tasked to deliver on behalf of the people of The Gambia.



Permanent Secretary
- Ministry of Tourism
& Culture



Hon. Minister -
Ministry of Tourism &
Culture



Chairman - Tourism
Select Committee
(National Assembly)



Director General
- Gambia Tourism
Board

UNDERTAKING BY THE TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

We the stakeholders of Destination Gambia, the Smiling Coast of Africa, undertake and declare our commitment to the implementation of the activities so contained in this Tourism Strategy document, which is intended to guide the development and sustainability of our Tourism industry over the next 5 years, from 2015 to 2020, and in line with our economic development blueprint, Vision 2020.



Chairman- Gambia
tourism Board



Director General -
National Center for
Arts & Culture

As vanguards of the Tourism Industry we note the challenge to our commitment and we are resolved in that endeavour. We are resolved that despite the challenges that may arise, we will work in a concerted effort to realize our overall aspiration of increasing our tourism air arrival numbers from the current hundred and seventy-five thousand to half a million air arrivals by the year 2020. We further commit, working together and in a concerted effort, to increase the contribution of Tourism to Gross Domestic Product from the current 16% to 25% by the year 2020.



Chairman - National
Center for Arts &
Culture



Director General -
Gambia Tourism
Hospitality Institute

As stakeholders of the Tourism Industry, we undertake to be guided by the fundamental principles of sustainability, equity, and fair play. In this regard, our strategic activities relating to Marketing, Product Development, Service Standards enhancement, Industry Capacity Building and workforce development, and Promotion of our Cultural Value Systems shall be pursued with those fundamental principles in mind. As a cross-cutting industry, we note the relevance of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership and in that regard we undertake to partner with those institutions relevant to our strategy and tourism mandate. This partnership outlook is even more urgent in the areas of improvement in air access; travel facilitation; marketing; product development; tourism security; minimization of global tourism shocks; and adoption of tourism best practices. Tourism is everybody's business and as vanguards of this industry, we ask for the support of all and sundry – Gambians and non-Gambians – living within or outside of our borders, including Honourary Counsels, International Tour Operators, Airline Operators, Associations of Interest in Tourism, PR & Marketing representative Firms, and you the Tourist for the realization of our tourism aspirations.



Chairman - Gambia
Tourism Hospitality
Institute



Chairman - Tourism
Marketing Committee



Chairman - Gambia
Hotel Association



Chairman -
Association of Small
Scale Enterprises in
Tourism



President - Gambia
Federation of Craft
Markets



Commanding Officer -
Tourism Security Unit



Chairman - Tourism
Technical Advisory
Committee



Chairman - Travel &
Tourism Association
of The Gambia

OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Tourism & Culture has responsibility for three satellite institutions. These institutions are:

- (i) The Gambia Tourism Board
- (ii) The National Centre for Arts & Culture
- (iii) The Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute

The Tourism Industry plays a pivotal role in our economy; evidenced by the below statistics:

- (i) 16 – 20% contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- (ii) Provides Direct Employment for 35,000 Gambians
- (iii) Provides Indirect Employment for 40,000 Gambians
- (iv) Generated Foreign Exchange Earnings of US\$ 85, 000, 000 in 2013
- (v) Has attracted Foreign Direct Investment of US\$ 45 million over the last 5 years

Notwithstanding the above contributions, the Tourism Industry continues to be overlooked by Government in terms of National Budgetary allocations, with average allocations, over the last three years of 0.3% of Central Government Budget. In monetary terms, this averages to about GMD17,000,000 from which the Ministry of Tourism & Culture is expected to pay the subvention of its satellite institutions. The budgetary allocation for 2015 is Gmd25,000,000 and the increase is primarily as a result of the Ebola challenge. As a result of this increase, the percentage allocation of the budget to the Tourism Ministry now stands at 0.4%. It is important to note also that actual disbursements are always less than the budgetary allocation.

The Ministry of Tourism & Culture is very cognizant of the budgetary constraints faced by Central Government and the challenge to satisfy the financial needs of every ministry and the respective satellite institutions under Government.

Notwithstanding the above financial constraints faced by the Government, it is my ardent conviction and belief that the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and its satellite institutions could make greater contribution to the economy of The Gambia in terms of:

- (i) Reaching the Vision 2020 aspirations of contributing 25% to Gross Domestic Product
- (ii) Doubling its Direct Employment (from 35,000 to 70,000)
- (iii) Doubling its Indirect Employment (from 40,000 to 80,000)
- (iv) Increase Foreign Exchange Earnings by at least 50% (from US\$85 million to US\$170 million)
- (v) Increase FDI by at least 50% by the year 2020

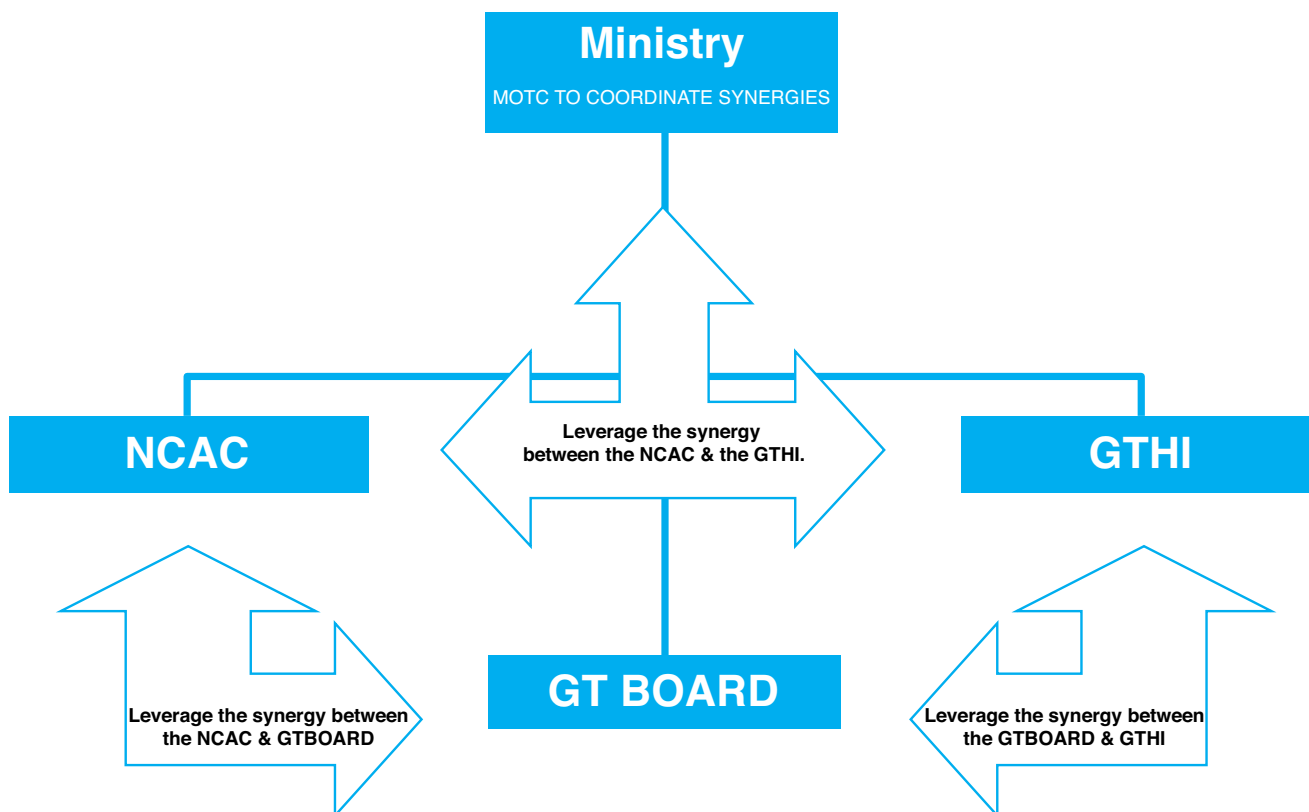
For the above aspirations to become reality, amidst our plans to become a middle income country and to realize our Vision 2020 and Vision 2016 aspirations, the Ministry of Tourism & Culture would require the following support:

- (i) Increase the current Central Government Budgetary allocation to Tourism from 0.3% to 1.5%.
- (ii) Support by Government of the strategy of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, and by extension, its 3 satellite institutions.

STRATEGY DIRECTION

Amidst the Vision 2020 aspirations for the Tourism Industry (highlighted above) and the need to render The Gambia a Tourism Haven, the Ministry is aware that for the conceived Vision 2020 aspirations to culminate into reality, the Industry **cannot continue to pursue business as usual and fundamental and sweeping changes must be undertaken and sooner rather than later**. *Time is of essence and timing is everything*, especially noting the stark reality that we have 5 years to reach Vision 2020.

The new Strategic Direction of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture is one of PERFORMANCE; performance that needs to start with the Ministry in itself and equally its satellite institutions. As a Government body the below framework is envisaged:



Though the above organogram is indicative of the framework that existed prior, the fundamental difference with what is envisaged now is the focus to bring out the complementarities among the satellite institutions under the purview of the Ministry. This leveraging of the complementarities would help achieve the synergies that exist among the satellite institutions, which has remained unexploited. The strategies to achieve this are five-fold:

- i) The Ministry will hold Quarterly Meetings with the Executive of the Satellite Institutions. The Executive shall comprise of :
 - The Chairmen of the GTBoard, NCAC, and GTHI (the satellite institutions)
 - The Director Generals of the satellite institutions and their deputies

The Ministry will have representation by the Minister, PS, DPS, and the Planning Unit of the Ministry

- ii) A Tourism Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) to meet quarterly, will be created and its membership shall comprise of:
 - The Minister, PS, DPS or Director of Planning (**3 – CM**)
 - Two members from each of the satellite institutions of the Ministry (The Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Director Generals) (**6 - CM**)
 - The Ground Tour Operator Association (**2 - CM**)
 - The Gambia Hotel Association (**2 - CM**)
 - The Chairman of the Travel & Tourism Association of The Gambia (**1 - CM**)
 - The Tourism Marketing Committee (**2 - CM**)
 - The Chairman of ASSET (**1 – CM**)
 - One member of the Tourism Security Unit (**1 - NCM**)
 - One member of the Joint Operations Committee – JOC (**1- NCM**)
 - One member of the Craft Market Federation (**1- NCM**)
 - One member of the Bird Watchers Association (**1- NCM**)
 - One member of the Tourist Taxi Association (**1- NCM**)
 - The Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (**1 - CM**)
 - The Gambia International Airlines (**1 - CM**)
 - Co-opted members depending on issues of relevance (**3 - NCM**). CPA, ECPAT, UNICEF, amongst others.

As per the above proposal, the Tourism Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) will consist of Core Members (CM) and Non-Core Members (NCM). The Core Membership will meet as per the prescribed periodic meeting schedule and the Non-Core Members will be invited as and when they are relevant to issues that are up for discussion.

- iii) The Ministry will institute:
 - a. An Annual Strategy Retreat with all the satellite institutions Management Team and Chairman and Board of Directors as a preliminary to the respective Satellite institution Annual Strategy Retreat for the conceptualization and preparation of their subsequent year Annual Work Plans and Budgets.

- b. A fortnightly meeting with staff of the Ministry in efforts to report on Monitoring of strategy implementation Action Points conceived in this Strategy Plan and to keep junior and support staff abreast of developments in the Ministry
- iv) Create 1 Focal Point (Desk Officers) from the Ministry for each of the 3 satellite institutions. Each Focal Point shall be supported by an Assistant. This is in efforts to build the capacity of the staff of the Ministry, ensure greater appreciation of the functionalities of the satellite institutions in order for the staff to better monitor achievements of the satellite institution Work Plans and evaluate Performance and gaps for redress. This framework would also provide secondment and job move opportunities for the staff of the Ministry to the satellite institutions when these opportunities arise.

The **Focal Points** shall be:

- Deputy Permanent Secretary – to be assisted by a junior staff
- Principal Assistant Secretary – to be assisted by a junior staff
- Director of Planning – to be assisted by the Planner

- v) The Ministry will facilitate an annual in-country Tourism Trade Fair (promotion of the first Trade Fair to coincide with OIC Kings and Heads of States Summit) to be organized jointly by the satellite institutions. In the subsequent Tourism Trade Fair West African Tourism Destinations will be invited and subsequently the invitations would be expanded. The idea is to create a Tourism Trade Fair in West Africa with The Gambia as the Host Country.

The Trade Fair strategy is also intended to:

- Rejuvenate the 'Mboka' initiative that existed between the two tourism industries of The Gambia and Senegal
- Implement the Tourism provisions of the **Bilateral Cooperation Agreements** between The Gambia and:
 - Mauritania
 - Turkey
- Implement the provisions of Cross-Border Institutional MOU Agreements between the satellite institutions of the MOTC and:
 - Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation
 - Senegal Tourism Board
- Pursue both ***Bilateral and Institutional Tourism Co-operation Agreements*** with:
 - Guinea Bissau
 - Nigeria
 - Cape Verde
 - Sierra Leone
 - Ghana
 - Mali

- Cape Verde
- Morocco
- Liberia
- Guinea Conakry

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The capacity development of the staff of the Ministry and its satellite institutions is of paramount importance if the Tourism Industry is to achieve its Vision 2020 aspirations. The strategy underpinning the envisaged capacity development by the Ministry takes cognizance of the guidelines and protocols at the Personnel Management Office (PMO) and the capacity development strategy is intended to compliment the capacity development and training opportunities that exists at the PMO. The fact that the PMO cannot possibly cater for all the capacity development and training needs of the Ministries under its purview and the satellite institutions under the ministries is also a primary reason why it is important for the strategy of the Ministry to address the capacity development and training needs of its staff. Whilst the Ministry will continue to benefit from capacity development and training opportunities from PMO, the below framework will underpin our envisaged capacity development and training strategy:

1. Have 1 staff of the Ministry as Focal Points for each of the satellite institutions under the purview of the Ministry. This 1 Ministry staff (and 1 assistant) will have the following responsibilities:
 - Apprise themselves of the Mandate of the satellite institution to which they are attached
 - Follow up on all correspondence to the Ministry from the satellite institution they are attached and on behalf of the satellite institution for closure.
 - Attend all functions and activities of the satellite institution, including at least one International Trade Fair and business mission, and as per the sanctioning of the Minister and the Permanent Secretary
 - Undertake Monitoring of the annual Work Plans of the satellite institution to which they are attached with the support of the Planning Department of the Ministry
 - Advise the PS and the Minister on gaps and challenges relative to the annual Work Plans of the satellite institution to which they are attached

2. For the above services under point 1 rendered by the Focal Points to the satellite institutions, the satellite institutions would undertake the following:
 - Extend invitation, through the Ministry, to their 2 focal points to attend their Work Plan activities
 - Extend invitation, through the Ministry, to their 2 focal points to attend one International Trade Fair in the year
 - Include the 2 Focal Points in their Capacity Development & Training programmes
 - Invite one of their Focal Points to the annual PAC/PEC sitting of the satellite institution
 - Share their approved Business Plan and annual Work Plan with their Ministry Focal Points

3. **All the satellite institutions under the Ministry will put in place the following:**

- **An Induction Programme for all new staff (HR Manager to Coordinate)**

The Induction Programme, at minimum, will provide an overview of the Tourism & Culture industry; an overview of the satellite institution and its mandate; an overview of the departments that make-up the institution, their functions, the mode of operation of the departments and their inter-linkages; how the institution works with the Ministry; and how the institution works with the stakeholders – both local and international – and how they are also regulated. The Induction Programme will be documented in Booklet form to be reviewed and re-printed every three years. All induction of new staff must be followed with a weekly attachment at the other satellite institutions, including the Ministry of Tourism & Culture.

- **An Annual Training Programme (HR Manager/Director to Coordinate)**

This annual training programme would be contingent on performance of the previous annual year and whose quantum would be determined by budget availability. Equally, all Directors of Departments at the respective satellite institutions will facilitate at least one fully funded training programme for the staff of its department through engagement with the many International Institutions offering such opportunities. This would feature as an objective under every director's Annual Objective. This will help optimize monies spent on Capacity Development and Training.

- **Annual Staff Objectives & Performance Appraisals in line with the Annual Work Plan of the Institution (HR Manager/Director to Coordinate)**

All the satellite institutions are mandated to institute annual Staff Objectives and Staff Performance Appraisals on a semi-annual basis. This is intended to ensure that all staff have set and agreed objectives as per their employment Terms of Reference and the annual Work Plan of the institution.

- **Career Path Development & Succession Planning (HR Manager/Director to Coordinate)**

All the satellite institutions are mandated to put in place a Career Path Development and a Succession Plan at both the Managerial and Director levels. The Directors will be responsible for the Succession Plans of their departments whilst the Director Generals will be responsible for the Succession Plans of the Directors of the departments. The HR Manager/Director will have responsibility to coordinate and document these plans. Succession Planning will also be linked to the Annual Appraisal Programmes of the satellite institutions. On-the-job performance, academic qualification, and experience will be the exclusive decision criteria to career advancement opportunities and succession.

- **Mentoring**

All the satellite institutions are mandated to put in place a Mentoring Programme, especially for new staff or staff that are within the Succession Plans of the institutions and who may likely move to a higher role within a 12-18 month period. A Mentoring programme should also be embedded within the department and should also be part of the Annual Objective of the Directors of the satellite institutions and should be part of the Annual Appraisal Programme of the satellite institutions.

- **Secondment**

All satellite institutions must provide secondment opportunities to staff within and outside of their institution and those of the Ministry. The objective of secondment is to help improve the capacity of staff and prepare them for future higher responsibility job opportunities. Secondment opportunities will be guided as per the policy in place at the Public Management Office and the Service Rules of the satellite institutions. Secondment will also provide Ministry staff the opportunity to benefit from higher paying roles should job opportunities become available at the satellite institutions. The Focal Point scheme will make these secondment much more effective and would alleviate the need for on-the-job training and Ministry staff benefiting from such an opportunity would hit the ground running having being involved as a Focal Point with the satellite institution.

In addition to the above, the National Center for Arts and Culture is to undertake a comprehensive staff audit exercise with the objective of documenting the staff capacity constraints and in efforts to address them. Equally, the staff audit must also ascertain if staff in their current roles are qualified to match the positions they currently hold and if not make propositions to address these gaps. **The staff audit exercise is important if NCAC is to effectively implement its mandate, especially considering the plans to render the NCAC a more effective institution.**

INDUSTRY REGULATIONS & MODE OF OPERATION

The regulation of the Tourism Industry is of paramount importance, especially if we are to achieve the Vision 2020 aspirations outlined for the Tourism Industry. An effective regulation of the industry calls for an:

- (1) Immediate review of existing **Acts & Regulations** of both the GTBoard and the National Center for Arts & Culture (NCAC) with specific focus on key institutional mandates
- (2) Immediate review of the National Cultural Policy of the National Center for Arts and Culture
- (3) Immediate review of the National Center for Arts and Culture **Business Model**. This is intended to render the NCAC an independent institution in terms of dependency on government subvention for the carrying out of its mandate
- (4) Immediate review of the **framework by which land are allocated within the Tourism Development Area (TDA)**. This process has begun and the TDA Status Report, which would be tabled to the Executive, outlines the challenges and the recommendations to overcoming the challenges
- (5) Review of the **GTHI Business Plan**. This should be undertaken in the near term (beginning 2016) as the institution needs to first settle from the recent transitioning from the Gambia Hotel School to the Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute, The composition of the Board of Directors of the GTHI to be more reflective of the Tourism Industry.
- (6) Immediate Review of **some of the Institutional Acts and Regulations that impinge on effective implementation of the mandates of the satellite institutions of the Ministry** for purposes of harmonization. This is crucial given the recent surfacing challenges between the GTBoard and the Municipalities; the GTBoard and the Food Safety & Quality Authority; and the GTBoard and the Treasury in terms of the provisions of the Gaming & Betting Act and who should collect licensing fees on operations in Gaming & Betting Houses, especially Pool Betting. The quantum of operational license fees and a rationalization in the number of gaming houses must also be undertaken to ensure we do not create a nation of gamblers dependent on a game of chance.

The reasons for the above reviews are as follows:

- (1) The 2011 Regulation and Act of the GTBoard have gaps compared to the Gambia Tourism Authority 2001 Act & Regulations. The GTA Act & Regulations was more comprehensive and addressed

regulatory issues that the GTBoard Act and Regulation failed to address. The GTBoard Act & Regulation did not also benefit from the advantage of a stakeholders' consultation when it was conceived, which would have greatly informed the Act & Regulation.

- (2) The NCAC Act & Regulation needs reviewing to account for the planned broadening of the mandate of the NCAC, especially as it regards Copyright and its implementation; rendering the NCAC financially independent and the broad powers for it to regulate and administer new planned activities of re-institutionalization of the National Troupe; Miss Gambia Beauty Pageant competition; and Inter-regional Cultural Awareness & Competition at the level of ECOWAS.
- (3) The land allocation framework within the TDA needs to revert to Best Practice and adoption of what use to prevail during the GTA days. ***A Select Committee comprising of relevant Ministerial institutions along with the Board of Directors of the GTBoard need to review TDA land applications*** following submission of application to the GTBoard; appraisal of the application; and subsequent recommendation by the GTBoard to the Select Committee with oversight from the Board of Directors before onward submission and recommendation to the Minister for approval. This process will ensure a more robust land allocation framework and would reduce opportunities for abuse of authority and favouritism in land allocation. It is recommended that the Select Committee be comprised of:

- The Director of Product Development, GTBoard
- The Chief Executive Officer, GIEPA
- The Director, Department of Physical Planning & Housing
- The Director, Department of Surveys
- The National Environment Agency
- National Center for Arts & Culture (Director General)
- Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute (Director General)
- The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism & Culture
- The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Regional Governments
- The Chairman, Board of Directors, Gambia Tourism Board

The Select Committee will also look into putting a framework in place to help in decision making in land allocation to pre-empt speculative outcomes and minimize tendencies for land allocations to end up in the courts as a result of non-development and re-entry pursuits of the GTBoard. The parameters to what would constitute the framework would take cue from the challenges and experiences of past allocations that have suffered such fate.

- (4) The need to review the GTHI Business Plan is as a result of leveraging the complementarities that exists amongst the satellite institutions. If the GTHI is to help in addressing challenges impinging on Service Standard and Quality of the Tourism Industry, its mandate must be oriented in that direction and the GTHI must be compelled, albeit by its Act & Regulations, to achieve that. The framework that would help it to achieve this would be put in place through consultation with the relevant Industry Stakeholders. This would equally call for a review of the Act & Regulation of the GTHI. Also of relevance to this review is the plan to render the GTHI as an internationally acclaimed and reputable Tourism institute and obtaining the requisite international accreditation and ISO certifications.
- (5) The need for the review of some of the Institutional Acts and Regulations that impinge on effective implementation of the mandates of the satellite institutions of the Ministry is solely for purposes of harmonization of the Acts and Regulations that are cross-cutting within certain government institutions. Considering that all the concerned institutions are under the purview of one Government and pursuing the same ultimate objective but under a different institution, it is imperative the institutions concerned work with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice to help address these challenges with recourse to frameworks that are agreeable amongst the institutions concerned and which serves the interest of all concerned.

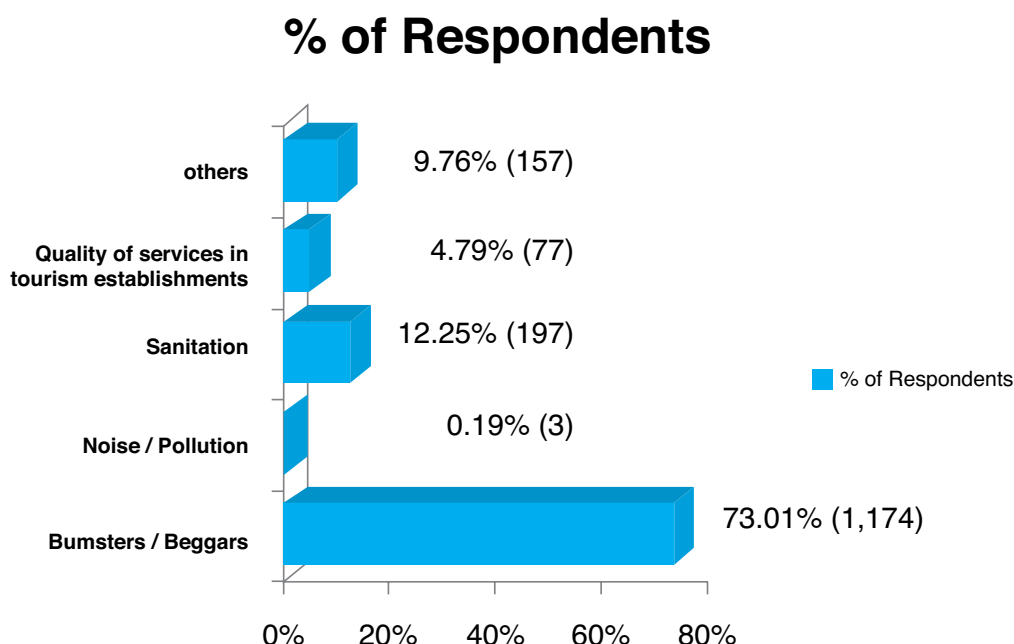
INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

The Tourism Industry, notwithstanding its successes, is fraught with difficult challenges that MUST be overcome if we are to realize the Vision 2020 aspirations for the industry. Principal among these challenges are:

- (1) Sex Tourism & Child Abuse & Exploitation
- (2) Bumsterism
- (3) Undeveloped and Under-developed land allocations on the TDA; TDA Encroachment in its variant forms, and poor planning and administration of sporadic Billboards on Bertil Harding Highway.
- (4) Seasonality of the Industry (Dependence on Charter Flights)
- (5) Global Shocks – Tourism Risks and the need for its Management

The below graphical illustration, based on the October 2013 to November 2014 Tourism Satisfaction Survey conducted at the airport, reveal some of the challenges inherent in the Tourism industry.

These indicative challenges need to be addressed as they are core to the success of the industry.



SEX TOURISM, CHILD ABUSE, & EXPLOITATION

The challenge of Sex Tourism, Child Abuse & Exploitation is a dire one and which needs no compromise. Though some initiatives have been undertaken by the GTBoard with support from Child Protection Alliance (CPA) and UNICEF, these have mostly been by way of sensitization to raise awareness on the zero-tolerance of Government on Paedophilia and child abuse and exploitation. There is a need to put in place measures that would stamp out these vices considering the negative impact they could have on the Tourism Industry. The challenges with Sex Tourism have been echoed by most of our Tourist Originating Countries – mostly Scandinavia – and these are some of the reasons why arrival numbers from Sweden has fallen over the years. The challenge with Sex Tourism is also the reason why the number of Family Holidays has not grown over the years as Tour Operators from our Tourist Originating Destinations have expressed concern that for Family Travel to be considered for Destination Gambia, the challenges with Sex Tourism must be addressed as the practice is blatant and in the open.

The challenges with Sex Tourism, if not addressed, would also make it difficult for us to realize our aspiration of attracting 'High-End' and High Spending tourists.

To address the challenge with Sex Tourism, the following will be undertaken:

- (i) Conduct periodic raids and in a tactful manner on renowned sex tourism spots in the TDA where 'prostitutes' converge to ply their trade. Where those caught are foreigners with no proof of being gainfully employed, they should be deported and not allowed re-entry into the country for a period of 2 years in efforts to discourage prostitutes from the sub-region travelling to The Gambia to engage in these unpleasant practices.
- (ii) Review the GTBoard Regulations and have all Bars and Restaurants close at 2a.m. This would help in minimizing and controlling prostitution. This equally requires that Night Clubs screen their clientele and discourage the prostitutes from entering the clubs lest they turn the night clubs into a brothel.
- (iii) The satellite institutions under the MOTC to work with the Tourism Select Committee to create a TV and Radio programme where the vices of Tourism will be programmed for engagement with the electorate
- (iv) The NIA and the NDEA to support the Tourism Security Unit with intelligence as it is believed that there exists a network of pimps who facilitate the sex trade. The objective is to weaken and eventually close down these sorts of establishments. This is pertinent as it would eventually filter into Child Abuse and Exploitation outfits and prostitution rings in The Gambia and all its attendant problems; which are in total violation of both our culture and religious norms.
- (v) Close down brothels and accommodation outfits where such vices happen.
- (vi) Institute an awareness programme on the practices of prostitution, child sex tourism, paedophilia and its negative impact on Tourism, our culture, and the ultimate undermining of our moral fabric. This to be by way of radio and TV programmes and talks given at schools targeting primary and secondary school children with the support of the Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education.
- (vii) **GTBoard** with support from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior (Tourism Security Unit) to institute a 24-hour Tribunal Court for adjudication of cases relating to tourism offenses.

BUMSTERISM

The challenge with Bumsters is one that needs addressing. Despite all the efforts of Government and schemes put in place to address this – for example, the institutionalization of the Tourism Security Unit – the challenge has persisted. ***According to a Tourism Exit Survey that was carried out by the GTBoard at the airport, out of 10,352 Tourists surveyed between October 2013 and November 2014, 73% of Tourists surveyed had identified the challenge of Bumsters as a concern.*** This shows the gravity of the challenge and the need to address the challenge.

To address the challenge with Bumsters, the following will be undertaken:

- (i) Demolition of all the illegal makeshift beach bars on the beach where so called Bumsters take refuge(Immediate)
- (ii) Conduct periodic raids on the beach to discourage Bumsters from being on the beach. This must be regularly enforced, even if twice a month throughout the year(Immediate)
- (iii) Create an education forum targeted to basic and secondary schools with the support of the Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education, to inform students of the relevance of tourism to the economy and how some of its vices, notably Bumsterism, can negatively impact on the industry (short term – in 2016)
- (iv) Seek the support of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education for a review of the Social & Environmental Programme curriculum with the objective of incorporating into the curriculum aspects of our Cultural Values that would help in the long run to overcome the vices associated with Tourism (short term – in 2016)
- (v) Institute Community Meetings on Bumsterism using 'Nyooni Neen La' GRTS programme as a platform (Short Term – in 2016)

- (vi) Amend/Expand the Tourism Offenses Act, 2014 to incorporate HARRASSMENT (bumsterism) as an offense and punishable by law(Immediate)

TDA CHALLENGES

The inherent challenges on the TDA are numerous and include, amongst others, land allocations spanning from 6 to 26 years that have remained undeveloped, under-developed, and mostly end up in the courts as a result of initiatives undertaken for their re-entry. The challenges also extend to illegal beach bars, illegal and mostly sporadic billboards with no planning on the Bertil Harding Highway, and the preponderance of flower outlets on the same stretch of road. All these challenges are captured in a TDA STATUS REPORT, which the MOTC and GTBoard are spearheading to address with the support of the Ministry of Lands & Regional Governments.

To address these overwhelming challenges, recommendations are provided in the TDA STATUS Report.

SEASONALITY

The challenge with seasonality is one that Destination Gambia can no longer afford. Whilst some progress has been made in extending the season by targeting Nigeria and Spain and challenging our PR & Marketing Representatives to change the perception of Destination Gambia being a 'Winter-Sun' Destination, more needs to be done if we are to succeed in becoming an all year round Tourism Destination.

To address the challenge of seasonality, the following will be undertaken:

- i) Expand our Tourist Origination footprint to cover **Russia, Turkey, Italy, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Scotland**; adding a new source market every season and now against 2020
- ii) Institute Student Travel programmes by leveraging existing Student Travel schemes and creating new ones by facilitating through the University Cultural and Academic Exchange Programmes for the Summer months. Specific countries of interest are the United States of America (Kunta Kinteh Heritage); United Kingdom (Eco-Tourism & Sports Tourism); Scandinavia (Cultural Heritage).
- iii) Develop Niche Tourism Products in Conference Tourism by offering additional incentives for investors interested in this area. Also engage with Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) organizers to position The Gambia as a MICE destination. This strategy must unfold over a 5-year period and should start with the ECOWAS sub-regional market.
- iv) Develop new tourism niche products over the next 5 years, which would include:
 - a. Bird Watching Fair
 - b. Sports Tourism
 - i. River & Sea Sport Fishing Competitions (International)
 - ii. Water Sporting Activities in the Bay Area (Cape Point)
 - iii. Cricket
 - iv. Football Sports Club Summer Camps
 - c. Food & Beverage Festival (International acclaim)
 - d. TDA Theme Parks (x3)
- v) Hotels, in efforts to encourage local tourism, to have special package offers for weekends to be extended to businesses – both private and public sector. To also work with the GTBoard to have such offers extended to our neighbors in Senegal through advertisements in DSTV, amongst other platforms.

GLOBAL SHOCKS – Tourism Risks

Global shocks are real in the Tourism industry. Over the last decade, the Tourism Industry worldwide has been confronted with the challenges of SARS (bird & avian flu), Volcanic Ash eruption, Rising Fuel prices (oil shocks), Threats of Terrorism, Increasing Visa Fees or imposition of new taxes such as the UK Air Passenger Duty (APD Tax), and recently EBOLA. Finding ways of mitigating these global shocks is a necessity considering the relevance of the Tourism Industry to the economy.

To mitigate these global risks, especially those which we may have control over or which we may be in a position to minimize their negative impact, there is need to institutionalize a Tourism Emergency Fund at the level of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture.

The Tourism Emergency Fund shall be funded as follows:

- a) 1% annual contribution of the total turnover of all the satellite institutions of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture
- b) Government initial seed money contribution of Gmd500,000 to the Tourism Emergency Fund
- c) 5% contribution on proceeds from all major activities undertaken by all satellite institutions of the MOTC. These are to be limited to the following activities:
 - i. Food & Beverage Festival
 - ii. Sea & River Creek Fishing Competition
 - iii. Miss Gambia Pageant
 - iv. Tourism Awards Weekend
 - v. Excellence in the Arts Awards
 - vi. National Troupe Outbound Performances
 - vii. Taste of The Gambia (GTHI)
- d) 50% contribution on all fines levied against industry stakeholders for violation of the Regulations of the Industry. For example, re-inspections to re-open hospitality facilities that are found to be short of meeting the established standards for their operations; imposition of penalties and fines as stipulated in the respective Regulations of the satellite institutions.

DESTINATION MARKETING

The marketing of Destination Gambia shall continue to be on the heels of the existing marketing strategies. The existing marketing strategies shall continue to focus on:

- i) Increasing our PR & Marketing representation footprint with focus on the countries targeted to help with our challenge of seasonality – that is – ***Russia, Turkey, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Scotland.***
- ii) Contract a PR & Marketing representation firm to cover the Scandinavia/Nordic countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland
- iii) Intensify our E-Marketing campaign and leveraging all social and multimedia platforms including the development of a Tourism App on the back of a GIS Mapping of the Tourism Development Area
- iv) Work with the ***Gambia Civil Aviation Authority and the Gambia International Airlines to improve air access to The Gambia.*** In efforts to realize our plans in some of our target markets and to mitigate looming Tour Operator dependency risks, there is need to seriously engage with the below schedule airlines and Charter Operators:

- a. TUI Scandinavia
- b. TUI UK
- c. Scandinavia Airlines (SAS – Schedule)
- d. Virgin Airlines (the Holiday Subsidiary)
- e. Delta Airlines (Schedule)
- f. Turkish Airlines (Schedule)
- g. South Africa Airlines (Schedule)
- h. Ethiopian Airlines (Schedule)

The need for improved air access, with particular emphasis on SCHEDULE FLIGHT cannot be overemphasized. Though the challenge of air access and the need to improve it has long been recognized and talked about, there is need to now take it seriously with a new sense of focus and commitment. To this end, the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and its satellite institutions, notably the GTBoard, cannot by themselves address this challenge. Rather there is the need to come up with a NATIONAL STRATEGY facilitated by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and supported by the Office of the President to address our air access challenge. In this regard, a task force comprising of the below institutions will be created to periodically reassess this crucial challenge given its cross-cutting dimension on our overall economic development agenda and in our economic development blueprint. The task force shall comprise of:

- Ministry of Tourism and Culture
- Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs
- Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment / GIEPA
- Ministry of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure
- Office of the President
- Gambia Tourism Board
- Gambia Civil Aviation Authority
- Gambia International Airlines

The justifications for the above institutions in the task force are as per the below:

- **Tourism:** because of its vested interest in this challenge
- **Trade:** because of the complementarity to tourism; if the planes cannot be filled with people, cargo from trade would be a winning proposal to most airlines and this would help in creating a joint initiative within the two ministries to push the trade agenda – becoming an Export Oriented Nation. This would also help in effectively utilizing the new cargo complex being built.
- **Works, Transport, and Infrastructure:** because this is the ministry responsible for transportation and the air access challenge is a transportation issue
- **Office of the President:** because both the GCAA and GIA are under the purview of this office but most importantly and given the schedule airlines in our target list we need the support of His Excellency, The President, in this strategic drive vis-a-vis supporting us at the bilateral level for the cases we intend to make to slowly but surely render The Gambia a HUB.
- **Gambia Tourism Board:** because of the same vested interest as the Ministry of Tourism
- **Gambia Civil Aviation Authority:** because of its relevance and technical importance in this initiative

- **Gambia International Airlines:** because of its relevance and technical importance in this initiative
- v) Embed Tourism Survey through administration of survey questionnaires by all three satellite institutions of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture with support of the Tourism Stakeholders, notably the Hotels, other accommodation providers, and Ground Tour Operators and International Tour Operators
- vi) ***Development of Promotional Literature and Marketing materials on Arts & Culture, Museums, and the Tangible Heritages of The Gambia by the NCAC.*** This to also include the creation and development of a City Tour Map Guide that accounts for the historical sites of Banjul – Hospital, Mosques, Churches, Residences, Colonial Monuments, J-22nd Square, the Arch, and the old and new Parliament.
- vii) ***Institute tourism visitation surveys at the various Museums and Tangible Heritage Sites of the NCAC*** with the objective of improving the museums through survey feedbacks from tourists. In line with this objective, NCAC to institute a Statistics & Surveys position within its organogram.
- viii) ***Institute a Research Grant at the University of The Gambia to undertake research on Tourism related matters*** – example, developing of a model to capture actual contribution of Tourism to GDP; Conducting desk Top Research on Competitors to Destination Gambia; and advising the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and it's satellite institutions on new and emerging trends in Tourism to ensure the Tourism Industry is up to speed with global tourism phenomenon.
- ix) ***Institute Foreign embassy engagement plans for support to Tourism Destination Marketing and Promotion.*** To work through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this endeavor.

For purposes of improving on Tourism Industry statistics, which serves the interests of a number of Government institutions, we will work with the **Gambia Bureau of Statistics, the Central Bank of The Gambia, and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs** and will seek Technical Assistance from the below in-country Missions:

- The IMF
- African Development Bank
- World Bank
- UNDP

In line with our Marketing re-think, the composition of the delegation that attends International Trade Fairs will be reviewed. Going forward and commencing with World Travel Market (WTM) in 2016, the following new guidelines shall obtain:

- (i) All Tourism Businesses wanting to participate in the Trade Fairs will be sold Stand Space at £600 for WTM, €750 for ITB and €600 for FITUR, and US\$500 for AKWAABA. This cost will include all required facilities of desk, table, pens and paper along with food. The GTBoard will facilitate pre-arranged meetings if needed but this must be requested at least three weeks before the date of the Trade Fair so it could be communicated to the PR & Marketing Rep.
- (ii) Attendance of Trade Fairs will be limited to 4 from the GTBoard (local and London Office) and two from the Ministry. In this regard, attendance of staff of the GTBoard and Ministry will rotate from one Trade Fair to another and will give key Marketing staff the opportunity to experience what obtains at Trade Fairs. This is also part of the Succession Planning and Capacity development initiative outlined in this strategy for implementation at the satellite institutions.
- (iii) At every Trade Fair we attend – notably ITB, WTM, and FITUR – we will showcase aspects of our culture on the Public Days of the Trade Fair, usually the last two days. At such, our Cultural Ambassadors – Sona Jobarteh and Jaliba Kuyateh – will join the Trade Fairs for the last two days to showcase aspects of our culture. We will also invite two wrestlers, funds permitting, to showcase and promote this aspect of our culture. The rationale of showcasing these aspects of

our culture is that the activities they would engage in would act as magnets in drawing the crowd to our stand and this opportunity would be used to engage in Business-to-Client selling. This would avail the Hoteliers the opportunity to showcase their products and raffles would be held among the public to win vacations to The Gambia. These vacation raffles (3) at most would be packaged in country prior to departure to the Trade Fairs and would include:

- a. Support from the hotels for a week stay
- b. Support from the GTBoard for a US\$500 pocket money
- c. Support from the airlines for 3 Free air tickets

To win these free vacations would entail answering 5 questions on Destination Gambia, which would be coordinated by the PR & Marketing Representative weeks before our arrival in the Trade Fair country and contestants will have to be present in person on the last day of the Trade Fair to win the holiday. This would help bring greater awareness to The Gambia as a Tourism Destination.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Product development is a critical aspect of our Tourism development aspirations and without which our chances of success in realizing our Vision 2020 Tourism Development aspirations would not be realized. There has always been a contention as to which one is more important or which one should come first – Product Development or Marketing of the Destination; a question that is reflective of the ‘Chicken and egg’ question, which comes first?

The fact of the matter remains that both are equally important and must be pursued jointly – if finances permit. In the case of Destination Gambia, there is an urgent need to focus on Product Development given the gains we have managed in marketing the destination and the quantum of dollar spent in that regard. We need to ask ourselves when the tourists do arrive in The Gambia what activities would they engage in that would make their holidays worthwhile. This question is relevant because gone are the days when the SUN, SAND, and SEA (The ‘3Ss’) provided the answer to that question. Tourism Destinations around the world, at some time of the year are equally able to provide Tourists with the SUN, SAND, and SEA. This is part of the reason why The Gambia has remained a SEASONAL Destination – from November to April, The Gambia is able to meet the SUN aspect of the ‘3 Ss’ and for this reason Western Europeans and Scandinavians flock to The Gambia as a result of harsh winter and limited sunshine. During the Summer and Autumn Months the same Tourists capable of affording more than 1 holiday in a year flock to the Mediterranean and Caribbean, amongst other places, where they can enjoy the SUN, SAND, and SEA. The ‘3 Ss’ therefore are no longer sufficient as a magnet to a Tourism Destination and neither is the EXOTIC appeal of Tourism Destinations because every culture of the world that is foreign to a country can claim to be exotic and since the world is becoming a global village the claim of what is truly exotic is becoming limited.

For the above reasons, Destination Gambia must seriously look into developing attractive Niche Markets in addition to what is a natural endowment – that is the SUN, SAND, and SEA. Destination Gambia must equally undertake to make use of its Natural Endowments to further develop its Tourism Industry and here the MAJESTIC RIVER GAMBIA and all its attendant fauna and flora endowments come to mind.

To transcend our existing Tourism Product Suites and in efforts to realize the Vision 2020 aspirations of the Tourism Industry, we must develop the following products and where possible through Public Private Partnership initiatives:

- i) **SHOPPING OUTLET** – a shopping outlet is a ‘**must have**’ to complement our half a million tourist arrival drive. The establishment of a shopping outlet augurs very well with our aspiration of rendering The Gambia a hub within the sub-region. Establishing a shopping outlet selling branded goods – perfumes, colognes, bags, wigs, hairs, pauses, shoes, clothes, suits, make-ups, watches, cigars, cigarettes, and other male and female accessories – will equally drive in the number of tourist arrivals where passenger volumes will enable The Gambia to compete within the sub-region on airline refueling costs. This will also give the destination the added advantage of becoming number one within the sub-region in terms of ICAO ranking. This will

put us in a good stead to becoming number one in terms of hub of choice for major airlines flying into West Africa.

- ii) **MARINA** – this is needed not only to give tourists an additional tourism activity to engage in but to, overtime, position The Gambia as an alternative harbouring point for yachts and sails that tour the world. European and Caribbean countries offering these facilities are becoming more and more expensive and hence the need to develop a Marina in The Gambia. All one has to do is to take an excursion around the creeks to Lamin Lodge to see why the time is right to develop a Marina around Denton Bridge. The creation of a Marina would equally create employment opportunities given the number of spin-off economic activities that are necessary to complement the marina.
- iii) **KUNTA KINTEH ROOTS HERITAGE** – this involves the implementation of the Juffureh Revamp Project. A Project Document along with the activities to be undertaken has already been developed and we are looking for possible funding to implement the US\$850,000 project.
- iv) **RURAL TOURISM** – this would entail first the implementation of the Foni Tourism Product (currently experimenting with Ndemban) as a pilot with subsequent replication across the other regions of the country. The ultimate aim is to decentralize Tourism and ensure the benefits from Tourism accrue to the rural folks. This initiative will focus on ecotourism related products. For an effective implementation of this initiative, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture will engage the following partners:
 - The Ministry of Lands & Regional Governments
 - The Ministry of Environment, Parks and Wildlife for revamping of Abuko Nature Reserve
 - The Ministry of Youths & Sports

The Ministry of Tourism & Culture working in collaboration with the Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency through the biennial Investment Forum will facilitate for investments and investment partners to improve the existing upcountry tourism products.

Developing Rural Tourism also calls for research and documenting our various Historical Monuments spread across the country and engaging with international cultural and heritage organizations to help us restore, preserve, and serialize, where possible, these historical sites/ heritages. In the above vein, the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and its satellite institutions will undertake to implement, as well, the following:

- Regional Cultural Festivals (for example, the ‘Choobalo’ Festival of CRR)
- A National Art Gallery
- A Craft Village
- Revival of the ‘Ninki-Nanka’ Myth

The **Regional Cultural Festival** initiative shall first endeavour to document all cultural celebrations/rites of passage in the various regions across the country with the objective of celebrating and showcasing them under a regional theme and in a 2-3 day programme of activities.

The **National Art Gallery** initiative shall endeavour to document and showcase the various artisan heritages of **weaving** (Gambisara), **pottery**, **blacksmiths**, **tannery**, and **tie & dye** (Dippa Kunda), amongst others, which would be the source of input for the National Arts Gallery.

The **Craft Village** initiative is to centralize the production and retail of Crafts. This will ensure that certain challenges currently been experienced in the industry will cease to exist and so would prime land within the TDA be freed up and put to more productive use. An additional benefit of the Craft Village concept is that it

would guarantee business for the craft retailers and at the same time would provide Tourists the opportunity to see at firsthand how the various crafts are made.

The development of the National Art Gallery and the Craft Village will be pursued in partnership with the Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency given the cross-cutting mandate of that institution with the GTBoard and the NCAC. Equally, the partnership would help us leverage support from the West African Trade Hub in Senegal and Ghana (USAID) and by extension the US Embassy in The Gambia. Achieving both the Craft Village and National Art Gallery would require the engagement of renowned Gambian artists both at home and abroad.

- v) **BICYCLE TRAIL** – the creation of a bicycle trail would provide many opportunities for the Tourism Industry; one of which is that tourists would have an added activity to engage in but additionally this would provide the Gambia the opportunity to become renowned as a cycling destination, which would open up a whole new Niche Market. What is important is that the length of the Bike Trail be at least 20-40 kilometers. Whilst Brusubi to Kartong is often talked about as a viable Biking Trail amidst NRA road expansion plans, there is nothing stopping the development of a meandering Bike Trail on the coastal front; a global rarity in itself and a product that would make The Gambia stand out.
- vi) **ISLAMIC TOURISM** – the Gunjur mosque currently under construction is a global rarity in itself; the mosque overlooking the Atlantic Ocean is a Unique Selling Point that would lure any Muslim serious about total submission (even if it is for a week) into Destination Gambia. What is lacking for GUNJUR to become the ISLAMIC TOURISM Destination of Africa is a complementary Hotel operated on Halal and Islamic principles integrated within the Mosque. The existing Bilateral relationship between the Islamic Republic of Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia provides us a unique opportunity to render GUNJUR the ISLAMIC TOURISM Destination of Africa, especially one that is not sect-based. The CAPRICE Hotel of Turkey (IZMIR and ISTANBUL) is one hotel that can help us realize our Islamic Tourism aspirations.
- vii) **MISS GAMBIA PAGEANT** – this is a product that has existed before, perhaps it was not looked at from a Tourism perspective then but it should be with its re-introduction as national beauty pageants are now leveraged to promote Tourism. This Tourism product would also give Destination Gambia the opportunity to showcase its culture and it would help the National Center for Arts & Culture to become financially independent. The MISS GAMBIA PAGEANT would be subsumed into the **TOURISM AWARDS WEEKEND**, which would become an annual calendar of event. This would also help to achieve a rationalization of the number of beauty pageants springing up in the country.
- viii) **THE GAMBIA NATIONAL TROUPE** – this is also another product that has existed before but which would now be leveraged as a vehicle to showcase Gambian culture and create the curiosity that would make Tourists want to come, see, and learn more of Gambian culture. The strategy is to get Foreign Missions in The Gambia with interest in Cultural Exchanges to work with the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and the National Center for Arts and Culture through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote and showcase Gambian culture and likewise appreciate and showcase their culture in The Gambia. Like the GTBoard Trade Fairs, the National Troupe would accord the NCAC outbound missions that would be used to not only showcase our culture but equally generate revenue for the National Troupe, the NCAC, and the Tourism Emergency Fund. Countries on our target list include:
 - a. Sweden
 - b. United States of America
 - c. The Netherlands
 - d. Norway
 - e. Germany
 - f. Mauritania

Given the existing strong bilateral relationship with Cuba, the NCAC, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will leverage the strong bilateral relationship to enhance the performance capacity of the National Troupe and to equally further strengthen our cultural relationship with Cuba and equally with Mauritania. The revival of the Cultural Troupe is also intended to bring out the complementarities between Culture and Marketing of the country as a Tourism Destination. ***To this end, Sona Jobarteh and Jaliba Kuyateh would be engaged as Cultural Ambassadors of the Destination and they would accompany the Ministry, GTBoard, and NCAC to the strategic Trade Fairs planned to bring greater awareness of our culture to these destinations in efforts to raise curiosity among tourists with the objective of luring them to come on holidays.***

- ix) **TOURISM AWARDS WEEKEND** – there is a dire need to institute an annual Tourism Awards Calendar of event. The institutionalization of such an event is underpinned by the below objectives:
- a. Recognize distinguished personalities and tourism businesses for their contribution to the development of Destination Gambia- both internal and external stakeholders
 - b. Encourage competition among the various tourism businesses for the respective categories of recognition, which in turn would help to promote best practice and improve on Service Delivery and Service Standards of the Tourism industry
 - c. Highlight during the Awards the achievements and challenges over the current year and plans going forward to address the challenges
 - d. Generate revenue for the satellite institutions of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and the Tourism Emergency Fund
 - e. Embed the complementarities of the satellite institutions of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture as the three would work together to deliver the annual Tourism Awards event.

QUALITY & SERVICE STANDARDS

The strategy to have the satellite institutions under the MOTC to complement each others mandate of each other is to help improve upon the Quality & Service Standards of the Tourism Industry. As such, all the three institutions have a critical role to play in this endeavour but notably more so for the Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute (GTHI) and the Gambia Tourism Board with support from both the internal and external stakeholders of the Tourism industry.

To improve upon the Quality & Service Standards of the industry, the following will be pursued:

- a. Government to revisit and undertake re-nourishment of the beach, especially the area around the Senegambia and Kairaba Beach Hotel end. Though the GEF Project under the NEA with support from UNDP has an envelope of support, the funds targeted for this is well below what is needed for an effective positive impact and to fully address the challenge.
- b. **Establish the GTHI as a Center of Excellence** – to achieve this, the GTHI shall pursue the requisite regional and international accreditations, notably ISO Quality certifications, TEDQUAL, and building of relationships with regional institutions (through MOUs, for example UTALI of Kenya) that already possess these for guidance in that quest. Also pursue MOUs with international hotels for global placement of GTHI graduates.
- c. Institute a Training Hotel facility within the GTHI campus to ensure practical training on courses such as Housekeeping, Front Desk Service, Room Service, amongst others.
- d. The National Training Authority (NTA) to review the **accreditation of the Tourism Hospitality Institutes operating in The Gambia** as these are churning out graduates who have minimal appreciation of What is Hospitality & What is Service. Bluntly put, these are money making institutes that are harming the industry rather than supporting it. The GTHI and the UTG Hospitality programmes are sufficient to cater for the Tourism Service development needs of the industry. Should an additional Hospitality Institute be warranted, they should be allowed under a tightened regulation with the requisite oversight in their Governance structures and consideration to be given

to the GTHI DG to sit on the NTA's Board of Directors and likewise the DG of the Gambia Standards Bureau to ensure national and international Service Standards and Service Quality are adhered to relative to their training and certification programmes.

- e. **The Gambia Tourism Board Regulation to be amended** to give powers to the GTBoard to not only close down tourism establishments that fail to meet the minimum established quality and Service Standards criteria but equally charge these establishments for re-inspections when they deem themselves fit to be re-assessed for commencement of operations.
- f. Implement the **GTBoard Service Quality & Service Standards Manual** once the aspect of Service Standards and Service Delivery is incorporated in the **GTBoard Inspections Checklist Manual**. The GTBoard Service Quality & Service Standards Manual must pay due cognizance to the Service Standards Training and the Report that emanated from that training, which was facilitated by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture in 2012 through the Consultant Dr. Novelli. The 'Mystery Guest Shopper' scheme shall also be instituted. GTHI to support the GTBoard in the Standards Classification and Service Standards initiative.
- g. **Institutionalization of the 'Clean Blue/Blue Flag' Safety concept** on our beaches in line with international best practice. To achieve this, private sector interest would be invited to invest and operate a mechanized beach cleaning scheme and the UNDP would be engaged to support the accreditation of the Clean Blue/Blue Flag scheme. The hotels and other enterprises on the beach would be engaged to support the private enterprise by buying their services to render the respective beach fronts clean at all times
- h. **Embed the Exchange and Capacity Development Programme** between the GTHI and Qatar through the Ministry of Trade and facilitated under a performance based scheme – both academically and post six-month placement experience and performance in the Tourism industry
- i. **Pursue the Exchange Programme lead with CAPRICE Hotel in Didim and Istanbul** for capacity development in Islamic Tourism. This opportunity to be also based on merit and a post six-month placement experience and performance in the Tourism industry.
- j. **Implement the Hotel Classification Scheme of the GTBoard to the letter**. Hotels failing to meet their Star Rating Standards would be downgraded and such downgrades would be advised to all of the Tour Operators so the Hotel Rates they attract would reflect the new rating.
- k. **Enforce penalties** on all Hotels, Boutique Hotels, Tour Operators, Ground Tour Operators, Travel & Tourism Association of The Gambia, and other Tourism businesses engaged in **EXCLUSIVITY Contracting, Discriminatory Pricing**, and other anti-competitive practices.

FINANCING & FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

The ultimate aim of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture is to help its satellite institutions create schemes that would enable it to become substantially independent of Government subvention.

This aim is to help Government gradually overcome its challenge of providing subvention to every public enterprise. The GTHI and the NCAC must by January 2019 become financially independent like the GTBoard.

To achieve this financial independence and thus allow Government to focus its limited financial resources to other social programme obligations, we seek the support of Government to institute the following revenue generating schemes:

Gambia Tourism Board

- i) Identify 5 land areas within the TDA to enter into a Public Private Partnership initiative to build:
 - a. a 3-Storey Parking Lot to decongest the narrow Senegambia strip and also render it a one-way traffic with exit through the road at ITC. Institute metered parking (at most 20) on the strip for those willing to pay a premium to park on the road
 - b. Complementary shops, cafes, and other lacking entertainment facilities to create two

additional 'High Streets' on the TDA. Currently the Senegambia Strip is the only 'High Street' in the TDA and the Duplex and Palma Strip, given the recent developments need to be developed into 'High Streets' as well. This would also help alleviate the challenges the Industry face in terms of preference for hotels on the Senegambia Strip as Tour Operators prefer and patronize first the hotels on that strip to the disadvantage of the other hotels that are not on the Senegambia Strip.

- c. Three Theme Parks within the TDA where Tourists, Gambians, and foreigners alike can spend afternoons and evenings with their families to relax and enjoy snacks and ice creams

To fund the above initiatives along with some of the product development plans outlined above, the Ministry of Tourism & Culture propose the following:

- Re-enter all lands that are not developed within the Brufut Heights sale allocation and have these put on the market for sale as they have breached their allocation terms. Before their re-entry we intend to have a Press Release in the Newspapers and on TV for one month. We will give the owners 6 months to undertake some development within their plots and failing which the allocation would be re-entered and put on the market for sale at a higher price from which they would be refunded their cost of purchase of the land.

National Center for Arts & Culture

- i) **Enforce implementation of the Artists Performance License Fees**, especially on International Artists; the proceeds of which would be used towards the promotion and development of talent in Arts & Culture. Despite the fact that the NCAC Act (2003) makes provision for this, this is not enforced. Its enforcement also calls for an amendment of the Act to ensure the onus for payment is on the Artist and not the Organizer. To ensure implementation NCAC to contract a Legal Counsel on annual retainer basis who would guide and engage artistes for payment and collection of such fees. The annual retainer fee of the Legal Counsel to come from the collected fees.
- ii) Institute an Operational License scheme for private museums; this would enable the NCACA to ensure that the arts and culture collections of these private museums are as per the regulatory guidelines of the NCAC Regulations. It would also enable the NCAC to have an inventory of what is showcased as arts & artifacts around the country.
- iii) Working in consonance with the GTBoard, NCAC to institute a radio and TV programme on the Arts, Culture, and Tangible and Intangible Heritage of the country
- iv) Institute the Miss Gambia Pageant/Beauty contest
- v) Institute the National Troupe
- vi) Institute Regional Cultural Tourism
- vii) Institute a fee for Student visitation to the Museums. This would be a token fee to be discussed and agreed at the level of the Ministers of Tourism & Culture and Basic & Secondary Education. This fee is intended to help with the maintenance and upgrade of the museums
- viii) Institute the National Arts Gallery (along with Regional Museums)
- ix) Institute the Excellence in the Arts Award
- x) Institute the Craft Village in partnership with the GTBoard
- xi) Implement the mandate of the Collecting Society of The Gambia (to be preceded by review, heightened awareness, and implementation of the Copyright Act. The Copyright Act to look into instituting Work Permit Fees on artistes –foreign musical bands – that perform at hotels and bars and restaurants across the tourism industry)
- xii) Engage the UNESCO sub-regional office in Dakar for support in documenting and exhibiting our Tangible Cultural Heritages, especially those now surfacing as historical artefacts. These would

help to subsequently generate revenue for the NCAC

- xiii) Explore the possibility of a Public Private Partnership initiative or Memorandum of Understanding among select parastatal to (GPA and SSHFC) develop the NCAC grounds around Fort Bullen into a Hospitality Hotel for revenue generation purposes and to equally resolve the challenge of a decent tourism accommodation in the North Bank Region. This could serve as the beginning to rendering Barra a formidable Tourism and Hospitality spot.

Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute

- i) Pursue the NTA levy on training and education. Currently the GTHI is not benefitting from the funds realized through this levy. The Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs along with GRA and NTA to be engaged to put in place the framework that would ensure GTHI benefits from this levy.
- ii) GTHI to pursue preliminary entrepreneurial initiatives on cottage industries to service the Tourism Industry. Example – the establishment of a Butchery programme at the GTHI with the ultimate objective of promoting small scale Butchery to meet the meat products demand of the Tourism Industry.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Tourism industry being a critical driver of economic activity must meet its quota in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), especially considering the vices that come with tourism – example, challenges with Child Sex Abuse, paedophilia, and prostitution. In this regard, the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and its satellite institutions plan to undertake and institute the below CSR programmes:

- (i) Partner the First Lady and make annual donations from proceeds of the above indicated fundraising activities of the satellite institutions towards **Operation Save The Children Foundation**.
- (ii) Partner the Child Protection Alliance (CPA) to raise awareness and help address challenges on Child Abuse.
- (iii) Undertake to hold monthly Radio/TV programmes on the Challenging issues of the TDA in efforts to raise awareness on these and to better educate the public on tackling these issues in the interest and sustainability of our tourism industry.

ANNEXES

MOTC Strategy Matrix : Activities Action Plan

MOTC	GT BOARD	NCAC	GTHI
Pursue increment in the Central Government Budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Tourism & Culture from 0.3% to 1.5%.	Implement the provisions of Cross-Border MOU Agreements between the GT Board and NTDC & Senegal Tourism Board	Undertake a comprehensive staff audit exercise with the objective of streamlining staff and assessing staff capacity constraints for redress of staffing challenges of the NCAC	Establish the GTHI as a Center of Excellence
Hold Quarterly Meetings with the Executive of the Satellite Institutions (Meeting to include Minister, PS, DPS, Chairmen, DGs, and Directors of satellite institutions)	Institute: * Staff Induction Programme * Annual Training Programme * Annual Staff Objectives & Performance Appraisal Framework * Career Pathing & Succession Planning * Mentoring Plan * Staff Secondment Plan	Institute: * Staff Induction Programme * Annual Training Programme * Annual Staff Objectives & Performance Appraisal Framework * Career Pathing & Succession Planning * Mentoring Plan * Staff Secondment Plan	Institute: * Staff Induction Programme * Annual Training Programme * Annual Staff Objectives & Performance Appraisal Framework * Career Pathing & Succession Planning * Mentoring Plan * Staff Secondment Plan
Create a Tourism Think Tank responsible for strategic direction of the Tourism Industry	Review the framework by which land is allocated within the Tourism Development Area (TDA) (immediate)	Develop Promotional Literature and Marketing materials on Arts & Culture, Museums, and the Tangible Heritage products of the country	Institute a Training Hotel facility within the GTHI campus
Institute an Annual Strategy Retreat comprising of all the satellite institutions Management Team and Chairmen and Board of Directors	Expand PR & Marketing footprint in Russia, Turkey, Italy, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia (Short to medium term)	Develop a City Tour Map Guide to showcase the historical sites of Banjul – Hospital, Mosques, Churches, Residences, Colonial Monuments, J-22nd Square, the Arch, and the old and new Parliament buildings	Embed the Exchange and Capacity Development Programme between the GTHI and Qatar through the Ministry of Trade and facilitated under a performance based scheme
Engage the National Training Authority (NTA) for review of the accreditation of the Tourism Hospitality Institutes operating in The Gambia	Contract a PR & Marketing representation firm to cover Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland (Immediate)		
Build an NCAC Headquarters (NATIONAL THEATRE COMPLEX)		Build an NCAC Headquarters (NATIONAL THEATRE COMPLEX)	

<p>Seek the support of MoBSE for a review of the Social & Environmental Programme curriculum with the objective of overcoming the vices associated with Tourism in the long run (short term – in 2016)</p>	<p>Intensify E-Marketing platforms * Develop Phase II of Website * Develop Tourism App on the back of a GIS Mapping * Enhance & Embed Facebook Page, Twitter Account, Newsletter, and U-Tube</p>	<p>Implementation/Enforce Artists Performance License Fees (both international & local artistes). The proceeds would be used towards the promotion and development of talent in the Arts</p>	
<p>Improve Air Access * TUI Scandinavia * TUI UK * Scandinavia Airlines * Delta Airlines * Turkish Airlines (in partnership with GCAA & GIA)</p>	<p>Improve Air Access * TUI Scandinavia * TUI UK * Scandinavia Airlines * Delta Airlines * Turkish Airlines (in partnership with GCAA & GIA)</p>	<p>Institute an Operational License scheme for private museums</p>	
<p>Institute a fortnightly meeting with Ministry staff for purposes of Monitorign & Evaluation of the implementation of the Action Points of the Strategy</p>	<p>Embed Tourism Survey through administration of survey questionnaires by all three satellite institutions of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture with support of the Tourism Stakeholders, notably the Hotels, other accommodation providers, and Ground Tour Operators and International Tour Operators</p>	<p>Institute tourism visitation surveys at the various Museums and Tangible Heritage Sites</p>	<p>Institute annual industry surveys on curriculum most relevant to cater to the needs of the Industry</p>
<p>Institute EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS Award</p>	<p>Institute awareness programme on the vices of prostitution, child sex tourism, paedophilia and the negative impact on Tourism and our culture through * Radio & TV programme * Giving talks at schools (targeting primary and secondary school children through support from MoBSE)</p>	<p>Institute EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS Award</p>	
<p>Create Focal Point (1 Desk Officer) within the Ministry for each of the 3 satellite institutions (Each Focal Point shall be supported by an Assistant)</p>	<p>Institute a 24-hour Tribunal Court for adjudication of cases relating to tourism offenses.</p>	<p>Implement the mandate of the GAMBIA COLLECTING SOCIETY</p>	
<p>Demolish all the illegal makeshift beach bars on the beach (Immediate)</p>	<p>Demolish all the illegal makeshift beach bars on the beach (Immediate)</p>		

Pursue both Bilateral and Institutional Tourism Co-operation Agreements with: Guinea Bissau; Nigeria; Cape Verde; Sierra Leone; Liberia; Guinea Conakry	Facilitate periodic (2x per month) raids on the beach to avert Bumsters challenges with the Tourism Security Unit to undertake the raids (Immediate)		
Review the Institutional Acts and Regulations that impinge on effective implementation of the mandates of the satellite institutions of the Ministry for purposes of harmonization (MOJ to support in this endeavour)	Review of existing Acts & Regulations * GT Board Act * GT Board Regulations (Immediate)	Review of the existing NCAC Acts & Regulations * NCAC Act * NCAC Regulations * CopyRight Act (Immediate)	Review of existing Acts & Regulations (Medium Term)
Institutionalize a Tourism Emergency Fund	Create an education forum targeted to basic and secondary schools to inform students of the relevance of tourism to the economy and how some of its vices, notably Bumsterism, can negatively impact on the industry with the support of MoBSE (short term – in 2016)	Review of the NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY (Immediate)	
Institute the 'Clean Blue/ Blue Flag' Safety concept on our beaches	Institute the 'Clean Blue/ Blue Flag' Safety concept on our beaches	Review of the NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY (Immediate)	
Undertake and facilitate the amendment/Expansion of the Tourism Offenses Act, 2013 to incorporate HARRASSMENT (bumsterism) as an offense and punishable by law (Immediate)	Institute Student Travel programmes by leveraging existing Student Travel schemes and creating new ones by facilitating through the University Cultural and Academic Exchange Programmes for the Summer months.	Review & Creation of a BUSINESS MODEL for the NCAC (Immediate)	Review of the GTHI Business Plan
Institute an annual in-country Tourism Trade Fair to be organized jointly by the satellite institutions (promotion of the first Trade Fair to coincide with OIC Kings and Heads of States Summit)	Undertake 5 Public Private Partnership initiative within the TDA for revenue generation purposes	Undertake 2 Public Private partnership initiative with select parastatal (GPA and SSHFC) develop the NCAC grounds around Fort Bullen into a Hospitality Hotel for revenue generation purposes and improvement in accommodation challenges in the North Bank Region	Pursue the NTA levy on training and education

Review the framework by which land are allocated within the Tourism Development Area (TDA) (Immediate)	Review of the framework by which land are allocated within the Tourism Development Area (TDA) (Immediate)	Document our Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage with support from UNESCO	GTHI to pursue preliminary entrepreneurial initiatives on cottage industries service the Tourism Industry. Example – the establishment of a Butchery programme at the GTHI with the ultimate objective of promoting small scale Butchery to meet the meat products demand of the Tourism Industry.
Institute Foreign embassy engagement plan for support to Tourism Destination Marketing and Promotion (To work through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Institute Foreign embassy engagement plan for support to Tourism Destination Marketing and Promotion (To work through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Institute Foreign embassy engagement plan to support the Marketing & Promotion of our Culture (To work through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	
Institute Community Meetings on Bumsterism using ‘Nyooni Neen La’ GRTS programme as a platform (Short Term – in 2016)	Institute Community Meetings on Bumsterism using ‘Nyooni Neen La’ GRTS programme as a platform (Short Term – in 2016)		
Expand our Tourist Origination footprint to cover Russia, Turkey, Italy, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia markets; adding a new source market every season and now against 202	Expand our Tourist Origination footprint to cover Russia, Turkey, Italy, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia markets;		
Institute a National Arts Gallery	Institute and embeded MICE Tourism	Institute a National Arts Gallery	
Pursue an Exchange Programme lead with CAPRICE Hotel in Didim and Istanbul for capacity development in Islamic Tourism	Develop Niche Tourism Products in Conference Tourism; Bird Watching; River & Sports Tourism; Food & Beverage Festivals; TDA Theme Parks		
Partner the First Lady Operation Save The Children Foundation as the Corporate Social Responsibility of the Tourism Industry	Partner the First Lady Operation Save The Children Foundation as the Corporate Social Responsibility of the Tourism Industry	Partner the First Lady Operation Save The Children Foundation as the Corporate Social Responsibility of the Tourism Industry	Partner the First Lady Operation Save The Children Foundation as the Corporate Social Responsibility of the Tourism Industry

Institute a Research Grant at the University of The Gambia to support: * Research on Tourism * Development of models to accurately reflect Tourism & Culture's contribution to GDP	Institute a Research Grant at the University of The Gambia to support: * Research on Tourism * Development of models to accurately reflect Tourism & Culture's contribution to GDP	Institute a Research Grant at the University of The Gambia to undertake research on Tourism related matters – example, developing of a model to capture actual contribution of Tourism & Culture to GDP;	Institute a Research Grant at the University of The Gambia to undertake research on Tourism related matters – example, developing of a model to capture actual contribution of Tourism & Culture to GDP;
Partner Child Protection Alliance (CPA) to raise awareness and help address challenges of Child Abuse	Partner Child Protection Alliance (CPA) to raise awareness and help address challenges of Child Abuse	Institute a fee for Student Visitation to the Museums	
Create three Leisure Theme Parks within the TDA	Create three Leisure Theme Parks within the TDA		
Create the below new Tourism Products: * Marina * Juffureh Revamp Project * Bicycle Trail * Ninkinanka Trail * Islamic Tourism * Tourism Awards Weekend	Create the below new Tourism Products: * Marina * Juffureh Revamp Project * Bicycle Trail * Ninkinanka Trail * Islamic Tourism * Tourism Awards Weekend	Create the below new Tourism Products: * Marina * Juffureh Revamp Project * Bicycle Trail * Ninkinanka Trail * Islamic Tourism * Tourism Awards Weekend	Create the below new Tourism Products: * Marina * Juffureh Revamp Project * Bicycle Trail * Ninkinanka Trail * Islamic Tourism * Tourism Awards Weekend
Resuscitate the below Tourism Products: * Miss Gambia Pageant * The National Troupe	Resuscitate the below Tourism Products: * Miss Gambia Pageant * The National Troupe	Resuscitate the below Tourism Products: * Miss Gambia Pageant * The National Troupe	Resuscitate the below Tourism Products: * Miss Gambia Pageant * The National Troupe
Develop and Promote Rural Tourism * Regional Cultural Festivals * Craft Village	Develop and Promote Rural Tourism * Regional Cultural Festivals * Craft Village	Develop and Promote Rural Tourism * Regional Cultural Festivals * Craft Village	Develop and Promote Rural Tourism * Regional Cultural Festivals * Craft Village
Institute the Air Access Task Force	Institute a radio and TV programme on the Arts, Culture, and Tangible and Intangible Heritage of the country	Institute a radio and TV programme on the Arts, Culture, and Tangible and Intangible Heritage of the country	Institute a radio and TV programme on the Arts, Culture, and Tangible and Intangible Heritage of the country
Enforce penalties hospitality businesses engaged in Exclusivity Contracting, Discriminatory Pricing, and other anti-competitive practices	Enforce penalties hospitality businesses engaged in Exclusivity Contracting, Discriminatory Pricing, and other anti-competitive practices		
	Facilitate periodic tactful raids on renowned sex tourism spots in the TDA to avert 'sex tourism'		

	Work with the Tourism Select Committee to create a TV and Radio programme where the vices of Tourism will be programmed for engagement with the electorate		Work with the Tourism Select Committee to create a TV and Radio programme where the vices of Tourism will be programmed for engagement with the electorate
	Close down brothels and accommodation outfits where such vices happen with support from the NDEA and NIA		
	Institute reassessment fees for closed hospitality businesses that fail to meet minimum established quality and Service Standards criteria		
	Review and implement the GTBoard Service Quality & Service Standards Guidelines following incorporation of Service Standards and Service Delivery parameters in the GTBoard Hotel Classification and Inspections Checklist Manual.		

